**Reflections on Chapter 1: Un-Standardizing Curriculum: Multicultural Teaching in the Standards-Based Classroom**

The central question to this book, and covered in chapter one, is the central question of “how can we live together justly, in ways that are mutually satisfying, and which leave our differences, both individual and group, intact and our multiple identities recognized. The answers lie within diversity rather than outside or despite it.” Mainstream knowledge, the dominant knowledge, is what is chosen to be taught in today’s schools, often excluding knowledge and information that would share a common identity with students of minority status. Chapter one stresses accumulating, valuing, and distributing a wide and varied knowledge set than which is set today.

The author goes through four central curriculum questions:

1. What purposes does curriculum serve?
2. How should knowledge be selected, who selects it, and what is the relationship between that knowledge and those in the classroom?
3. What is the nature of students and the learning process? How do we organize learning experiences?
4. What is the evaluation, assessment, and accountability process?

These are great questions that can arise much debate over curriculum in today’s educational landscape. The author discusses four main groups historically which pertain to curricula and educational philosophy, humanists, developmentalists, social efficiency educators, and social meliorists. Humanists believe in the power of reason and the domination of western culture; developmentalists believe in interests and growth of the child, on par with a Montessori philosophy; the social efficiency educators, base their education philosophy on the needs of economics and industry in society; and social meliorists, who believe curriculum is a way of preparing citizens to address social issues. I believe today’s education and curriculum encompasses a combination of these at varying levels depending on the school and region of the country.

The author goes on to talk about the history and current circumstances of educational reform. He relates many of the movements of civil rights in the United States that coincide with educational reform, and have a direct impact on it. He discusses textbooks, the evolution of how are they were written, and continuing controversies. One thought that struck out at me was textbooks deciding “whose knowledge counts” which can be an issue of everlasting debate. As I embrace my own multi-culturalism living in one of the largest cities in the United States, I often ponder the narrowness of textbooks I was exposed to in high school, which primarily left out a myriad of cultures, ideals, viewpoints, and historical happenings that I would never learn about. Because of the expansive knowledge of our world and history, what knowledge is to be included, and which is not? The embrace of online technology could solve the problem, the internet being a textbook of infinite pages.

Another theory touched on that spoke out to me was “a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy in which teachers intentionally connect teaching to the lived experiences and knowledge frameworks of their students and student’s communities.” This is something I am constantly thinking about when choosing content to be applied to my curriculum, choosing music that would directly relate to the majority Hispanic community at my school. Besides content though, how can I adapt my teaching style in every way to better address my culturally diverse population of students? It is a question I ask myself constantly throughout the year.

Another topic the author discusses is educational reform, legislation, and the ever evolving policies that massively affect the educational system in America. One simplistic point the author makes, is the use of the word “children” defining every child in America in the same category, to be address as one category, as one perspective group to be changed and improved, not be left behind. But as every teacher knows, and as this book points out, the group children represents is such a wide array of cultures, individuals, and personalities, of which policy cannot replicate effectively into such a diverse group.

The author introduces his case study for the following chapters, focusing on the four central curriculum questions discussed early in this reflection in relation to a multicultural curriculum and the effects of standardized measures in an ever diverse educational world.

Central question: **4) How should curriculum be evaluated? How should learning be evaluated? To whom is the curriculum evaluation accountable?**

**The key to this question is a wide and varied set of measures and evaluation tools, applied, and constantly adapted to be the most effective for each specific population of students. In the age of data and statistics, and the use of the incredible computer and online technology, this can be achieved. One of the biggest problems with this approach is that it is a broad and non-specific solution that cannot be replicated across the country. Policy makers are obsessed with broad solutions that can be implemented across the board, such as standardized tests, with a supposed outcome of raising the standards of education across the country. Unfortunately this has not happened, and in my opinion the only use it has actually has, is emphasized the drastic inequality of schools that need to be addressed, a question and topic needed to be discussed.**

**The curriculum evaluation needs to be accountable to all involved, with no sole blame being pressed. Accountability and intervention needs to be applied at every level, student, teacher, parent, administration, district, and policy maker. Thus accountability can be focused at some level depending on the nature of intervention, but to make accountable only one level of the process will not lead to solutions. You cannot cure a sickness by treating just one symptom of a multi-symptom attack.**